

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ABIJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BANGUI 37

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY N

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS COLLOQUIUM, BUTARE, JULY 3-7, 1978

REF: KIGALI 1157 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS IN ORGANIZING
COLLOQUIUM, EVENT CAME OFF AS SIGNAL SUCCESS. PARTICI-
PANTS FROM SIX FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES ENGAGED IN SPIRITED
DISCUSSION OF POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN
GENERALLY FRANK AND COLLEGIAL ATMOSPHERE. RWANDAN
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PRESS COVERED COLLOQUIUM WITH LIBERAL QUOTATION OF
SUBSTANTIVE REMARKS AS WELL AS EXPRESSIONS OF SATISFACTION
AT ITS SUCCESS. THIS WORTHWHILE RESULT CAME AFTER
CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION AND SCRAMBLING IN WEEK BEFORE
COLLOQUIUM, DURING WHICH ORGANIZERS DISCOVERED MANY
ARRANGEMENTS HAD NOT BEEN MADE. ASSISTANCE OF
MANY OF ADDRESSEES SINCERELY APPRECIATED BY EMBASSY

AND COLLOQUIUM ORGANIZERS. END SUMMARY.

2. AS INDICATED IN REF USINFO, BUT ARE COLLOQUIUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA TURNED OUT TO BE CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS FOR RWANDAN ORGANIZERS AND FOR PARTICIPANTS. TOTAL OF 25 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED, INCLUDING 8 RWANDANS, INVITEES FROM 5 OTHER FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN COUNTRIES (BURUNDI, ZAIRE, CHAD, IVORY COAST AND CAE) AND BELGIAN, FRENCH AND AMERICAN EXPERTS EITHER WORKING IN RWANDA OR INVOLVED IN ORGANIZATION OF COLLOQUIUM. ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS, INEVITABLE AFRICAN TRANSPORTATION SNARLS, AND LACK OF COORDINATION IN DAYS BEFORE COLLOQUIUM BEGAN APPARENTLY PREVENTED INVITEES FROM SEVERAL OTHER FRANCO-PHONE AFRICAN COUNTRIES FROM ATTENDING. AS IT TURNED OUT, HIGH RANKING PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED FULGENCE SEMINEGA, PRESIDENT OF RWANDA SUPREME COURT (AND OF COLLOQUIUM); SYLVESTRE NZANZIMANA, RECTOR OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA (UNR); AMADY NATHE, PROCUREUR GENERAL OF N'DJAMENA APPEALS COURT, CHAD; MARCEL MBAYE, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF JUDICIAL SERVICES, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, CAE; VINCENT NDIKUMASABO, COUNSELOR TO SUPREME COURT OF BURUNDI, BONAVENTURE NICIMPAYE, RECTOR OF UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI; MAMADOU FADIKA, FIRST PRESIDENT OF COURT OF APPEALS OF ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST; KAMANDA LUMPUNGU, DEAN OF FACULTY OF ECONOMIC SCIENCE, UNAZA, ZAIRE; AND OTHERS.

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IN ADDITION TO SEMINEGA MENTIONED ABOVE, ORGANIZERS INCLUDED FILIP REYNTJENS AND JAN GORUS (BOTH BELGIAN) OF THE UNR LAW FACULTY, HURST HANNUM OF INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (IILED), AND WARREN WEINSTEIN, CONSULTANT, OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

3. MEETING FOR FOUR DAYS, THE PARTICIPANTS READ AND DISCUSSED A SERIES OF PAPERS ON THEIR GENERAL TOPIC. DISCUSSIONS COVERED TRADITIONAL AFRICAN IDEAS OF HUMAN RIGHTS -- RIGHT TO LIFE, TO RECEIVE JUSTICE, TO EDUCATION, TO MOVE ABOUT FREELY, TO PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC

DECISION-MAVBZZ-- AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN GUARANTEEING EQUIVALENT RIGHTS AS AFRICAN NATIONS MODERNIZE. SUCH CONCEPTS OF MODERN GOVERNMENTS AS CHECKS ON EXECUTIVE POWER, NEED FOR INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND FREE AND COMPETITIVE PRESS WERE EXPLORED WITH RECOGNITION OF DIFFICULTIES IN REALIZING IDEAL FULLY IN IMMEDIATE PRACTICE. NORMS OF SUCH INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED INSTRUMENTS AS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WERE GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY PARTICIPANTS, BUT THE QUESTION WAS ALSO RAISED AS

TO WHETHER HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO AFRICAN PERCEPTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. THE COLLOQUIUM WILL PUBLIST A REPORT OF ITS DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS, BUT WE CAN SAY WITH ASSURANCE THAT THE EXPERIENCE WAS HIGHLY POSITIVE FOR PARTICIPANTS AND JUSTLY A SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR RWANDANS. THEY RISKED POSSIBLY STIMULATING BAD FEELINGS BY THEIR INITIATIVE HAD DISCUSSIONS DESCENDED TO WINDY CONDEMNATIONS OF ACOIVITIES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE COLLOQUIUM OR, AS SOME FEARED, NAMECALLING BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS (WHO WERE INVITED IN THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITIES PARTLY TO REDUCE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION).

4. WHILE SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS OF COLLOQUIUM MADE EFFORT
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WORTHWHILE, ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION LEADING TO EVENT ITSELF LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED. THERE ARE OF COURSE FORMIDABLE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES IN MOUNTING EVEN SUCH A RELATIVELY MODEST COLLOQUIUM AT THE REMOTE UNIVERSITY TOWN OF BUTARE, BUT RWANDANS CAME THROUGH IN FINE FASHION, HANDLING VISAS FOR PARTICIPANTS, TRANSPORT BETWEEN KIGALI AND BUTARE, LODGING AND INCIDENTALS FOR PARTICIPANTS. THUS OUTSIDE INVITEES WHO ACTUALLY CAME FOUND EVERYTHING IN ORDER AND THEMSELVES WELCOME. WHEN AMERICAN ORGANIZERS ARRIVED IN COUNTRY, HOWEVER, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT SOME ESSENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN NEGLECTED, PARTICULARLY INCLUDING COMMUNICATION WITH INVITEES AND FIRM PLANS FOR TRAVEL AND EXPENSES OF PARTICIPANTS. THIS EMBASSY LENT A HAND; AND FLURRY OF CABLES BETWEEN KIGALI AND ADDRESSEE POSTS SOUGHT TO REASSURE INVITEES THEY WOULD BE WELCOME, AND TO TIE DOWN RELATED ARRANGEMENTS. ON BEHALF OF ORGANIZERS (AND ITSELF), EMBASSY THANKS ALL POSTS WHICH JOINED US IN LENDING SUPPORT TO COLLOQUIUM ORGANIZERS.

6. ON BALANCE EFFORT WAS HIGHLY WORTHWHILE, AND WE HAVE CONGRATULATED RWANDANS ON THIS IMPRESSIVE MANIFESTATION OF THEIR POSITIVE INTEREST IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS HAND IN HAND WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IN THE END, COLLOQUIUM WAS SUCCESSFUL IN LARGE MEASURE BECAUSE OF CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT OF GOODWILL ON THE PART OF RWANDAN ORGANIZERS AND OTHER AFRICAN PARTICIPANTS.
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